

## The Development of the Communication Competences. Contribution of the Journal to Academic Education of Students

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**Abstract:** Our paper presents the importance of the journal for developing the communication competences and social and professional integration of students. These aspects are important but often they are neglected in academic activities, because the professional skills are priority in *Curricula* of faculties. In this paper we analyze the theoretical importance of the journal and its forms to present from communicate and reflexive perspectives. The paper offers a few examples of good practice which hopes the teacher to develop the communication competences of students.

**Keywords:** professional education; communication; didactical instrument; competences

### 1. Introduction

The university as a training and development environment offers to students, regardless of the profession for which they decided to prepare, a lot of learning situations needed for the enlargement of communication and social integration competences of its beneficiaries. Those competences are subsumed both to training and improvement of students in the chosen professional domain on the hand, to the social relationship and integration in the community which belong them, on the other hand. The professional skills are very well represented in the studies programs, but the social competences, the communication competences and of the social-integration are not so generous represented in the academically *curricula*. This situation is not an evidence of less importance of them or that these competences were neglected.

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In fact, the communication competences can be developing every time, most in the professional education. So, the communication competences are necessary for realize the objectives of the specialized disciplines.

Professional education has a theoretical, scientifically and practical, technological, characteristics. But it is necessary to encourage the intellectual, socio-affective, psycho-physical and communication activities because the professional education needs to involve the student's personal and creative development. The professional education prepares the young generation for tomorrow's society (Peretti, 1996); it contributes to the education of creativity and of the social responsibility. Thus, the individual's responsibility and morality are significant components that add to the professional abilities.

Therefore, professional education must be correlated with the active abilities promoted and built by all the academic subjects. Due to its valances, it must play an important role also in the training of the didactic staff, no matter their specialization.

## 2. Hypothesis, Objectives and Observations

Our paper starts from the premise that it is necessary to develop the communication competences in the same measure with the professional competences. Though the communication competences are not explicitly included in the *Data Sheets* („Fișele disciplinelor”) of the professional academic specializations, we must give a special attention to their competences. In generally, these *Data Sheets* have not the instruments and strategies oriented to the development of communication competences.

Therefore, we offer in our paper a some of examples and instrument which can be easy applied to any professional training field. Among them we attribute a special place to the journal. In this way, our proposal may contribute to the configuration of some educational strategies centered on the development of the communication competences to the students. The journal, especially the reflexive one, is capable to be a didactic instrument which guides the modernization of education. From this point of view, the students are being helped to know themselves and the others, to manifest a correct attitude towards themselves and others, towards life in general.

Our proposal may positively contribute to the configuration of some educational strategies centered on the development of the communicate competences to the

students. Also, it can be proved that the success of a didactic activity is assured by the quality of the reflections and that due to these facts.

The academic prepare of students is oriented towards to their profession, on former and develop those competences associated to profession chosen by the students. The future specialists must have a very good professional training but they need to have the abilities of relating to the other, from in the same profession or not, and to transmit to the other the professional knowledge, to develop the interpersonal relationship.

Next, we selected a few frequently and generally professional competences, professional skills, from the academic Data Sheets. We correlated those competences with the communication situations and the social relationship situations. In this way, we identified communication competences which are associated with the professional skills. This relationship between the communication competences and the professional skills can be better shown in the following table.

**Table 1. The communication competences and professional education**

<b>Professional competences</b>	<b>Communication competences</b>	<b>Social relationship situations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to understand and explain the procedures to obtain a certain product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to cooperate efficiently on in groups;</li> <li>• to manifest an equality and tolerance attitude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• common and differentiated work;</li> <li>• tasks in learning applications groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to compare the interpretation of provisions legislative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to participate to the construction of a collective opinions;</li> <li>• to respect the rules of the group activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participating at the debates</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to identify the ways that ensure the promotion of product's operating principles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to shallow judgement under the form of the appreciations of the type: „I have found out”, „I do not know”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborative learning;</li> <li>• solving the cases-studie;</li> <li>• the work tasks;</li> <li>• to develop the projects</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to apply the principles and rules of professional conduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to obedience, to respect the others opinions and completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involve in the debate activities or the critical analysis</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to make in collective or in the small group the analysis of the lessons and of the plan from the perspective of one's own goals;</li> <li>• to establish one's own targets on what concerns the professional development</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to form the interest for the professional development and self-improvement of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to compose and saying the discourse;</li> <li>• to make some applicative techniques to practice one's skills and abilities, or to interiorize knowledge;</li> <li>• to establish in group or collective connections or relations between the experiences gained upon which the students have reflected in an organized manner by means of comparisons, analyses and interpretations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluation and self-evaluation exercises;</li> <li>• debate „Pro / Contra”</li> </ul>

The Table shows that training and development of professional skills needs to the communication and social competences. The student prepare better for the profession chosen if he is involved in the group activities, if he is able to construct a discourse, a speech, to order, transmit and receive information.

During him professional prepare, the student can be required to initiate the contacts with the colleagues, teachers, nondidactical persons from the university, with the instructors of specialized practice. In this way, the student realizes with these persons a connection through he communicates and receives information which can influence the persons and their relationship. The support of the message sent or received can be a material support (specialized information, dates, documents etc.) or immaterial support (ideas, affects, convinces, impressions etc.), Also the student may use the secondary tools and techniques of communication and relationship (writings, mass-media, video-audio, virtual and electronical instruments) (Strampel & Oliver, 2007).

Communicating at the interpersonal level, the student can transmit and share ideas, information and emotions. The communication competences help to student to identify the problems of the different situations, to find the solutions for these problems, to make decisions and to prevent/diminish conflicts, disputes. Thus, the student develops the relationship competences (working in the group, in clubs etc.). The student must be prepared also from the perspective of the organizational communication which is specific to the chosen professional domain. Thus, the student could former the communication competences necessary to prevent, manage and diminish the conflicts generated by the obstacles which occurring the interpersonal and social communication, like as cultural, religious, gender, status, economical and ages differences. All of these aspects above mentioned are important for the future specialist especially that he can has more responsibility, supplementary ones, as the management, coordination and execution responsibilities. Having these supplementary responsibilities, the student can composes and transmits the messages, releases to the different institutions, to local community or the another categories of public.

The communication and social relationship competences can be training in the same time with training professional skills. In this sense, in the academic space the teaching and training strategies can be used to realize these formative dimensions. The problematized learning, the algorithmic and conversational strategies, the cooperative learning, discovery learning, the collaborative learning (Nicu, 2007) are a few examples used in the professional training students. All of these didactical modalities, in their application, they calls the communication and relationship competences.

Also, the reflexive activities are important to training the communication competences. Those activities performed by students can have the forms of the didactical games or the reflection exercises. The reflexive activities are intended to allow the students to think about the work done, the experience, impressions and emotions lived after the courses, seminars, practical applications.

By gaining the ability “to look back” upon what they have done or experienced (Nagata, 2006), the students can repair or develop their abilities according to their own interests and potential. Personal reflection helps students to restructure the essence of the learned and to want to learn more. Of course, the professional dimension of those activities must be not neglected. More and more, the reflexive activities help the student to realize a very good communication with himself. In this way, it is assured a high quality of the intrapersonal communication.

In the specialty literature the personal reflection is presented like as “a method of the communication based on the internal language” (as a dialog interiorized) (Forthergill, 1974) and as a modality of the mental action which conducts to discover their own person. This is an action subordinated to the critical spirit. In general, the reflexivity appears as a conscious attitude, brought about and followed in an evaluative purpose

Reflexivity refers to a person’s attitude towards an active meditation over his/ her own deeds and feelings, over their personal accomplishments and over the changes produced in his/ her psycho-behavioral and affective- volitional structure.

The reflexive abilities are both the meta-cognitive competence and behavior, on the first hand, and the career management and the personal development competences, on the second hand. Reflexivity has manifested in different forms, passing from the efforts of knowledge and self-knowledge, especially by means of introspection, to those that urge people to have a skeptical look on the world. The observations include their impressions, feelings, recommendations and suggestions So, the reflexivity is linked to self-knowledge and self-development, the basic sides of self-education.

Combining reflexivity with the social learning will help to identify and apply the strategies of inter-knowing and of adapting (Moon, 1999), respectively of psycho-socio harmonization.

Next, we propose to insist on the Journal, because this learning and reflecting instrument allows a more cognitive, affective and motivational involvement of students. In this journal the students have passed experiences, feelings, opinions, knowledge and skills obtained in them learning process

The Journal is a learning instrument through which it is recorded the events, ideas, and personal experiences. From the reflexive perspective, the journal is a dialogue of student carried with himself in learning about their own mental processes. However, the journal develops the learning process by the introspection and reflection.

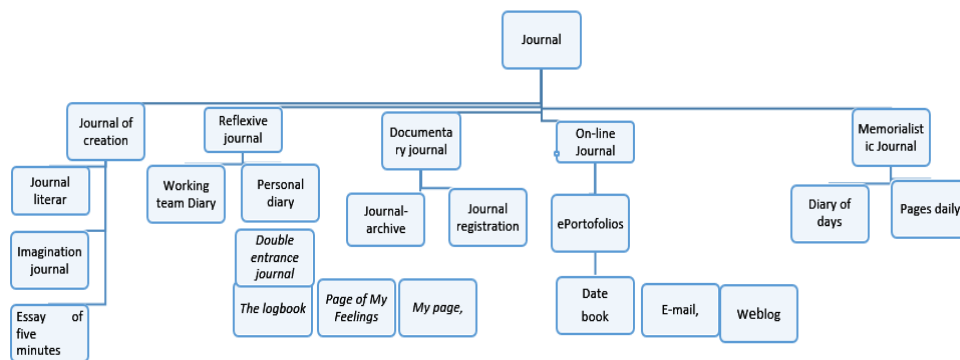
Such as a didactical instrument, the journal has many conception and presentation forms, variances, depending on:

- a. the purpose for which the journal is used:
  - to describe something or somebody;

- to observe any changes of social, political realities or of the human mentality;
  - to relate about a reality, an event or to reflect on those and to present some impressions;
  - to develop the critical thinking;
  - to reflect about the experience and their modifications suffered;
  - to learn by the experiential activities;
  - to share the experiences with colleagues.
- b. the actors who are coming to complete the journal:
- personal/individual journal;
  - journal of the group/the class.
- c. the kind of lead mod of activity:
- journal requested and directed by teacher;
  - the control of writing belongs only the student;
  - spontaneous or directed journal.
- d. the time of writing:
- continuous or limited writing;
  - in a certain sequence of a lesson or after the lesson:
- e. the specify of learning discipline (the accountability evidence, the registration of the events conducted on a certain period of time, the registration of the sociological changes);
- f. the mod of exploiting of the dates of journal (read notes, written, publicized);
- g. the support of composing: on the paper, on the electronic tools, online (MediaWiki, PBWiki, MoinMoin, Wikispaces, SeedWiki, TWiki, ZWiki, OpenWiki, SocialText, TiddlyWiki etc). All the products of the students' activities being archived and open to comments, measurement and appreciation by their colleagues or by other "visitors" as a portfolio (Dobrica, 2006).

In conclusion, the journal has more variances but all of these can be adapted by the research interests or by personal intention, by own life interests.

Starting from these observations, we propose the following short classification of the forms of journal:



**Figure 1. The types of journals**

Because the use of the journal is a difficult problem of the academically education and because this learning instrument contributes to involve of communication competences and to socio-professional integration of the students, we offer to teachers the following practical suggestions:

- the dates on the journal are not genuine; these dates depending on the context of writing, the conditions that influenced the moment of writing of journal. From this cause the dates cannot be critically/objectively examined;
- the problem of journal must be subsumeted to the analyze of discourse;
- the student needs to time for complete the journal;
- the students must understand that building up reflexivity competences is a difficult process which needs time, perseverance and a lot of attention;
- the reflection activity, for writing the journal, must be guided by well determined criteria;
- the activities of reflexive and analyze writing must be “negotiated” with the students to following some clearly established rules;
- the teacher must observe systematically the students, to get permanently informed about the students’ particularities, interests and needs



(intellectuals, professional and affective needs, abilities, types of intelligence, level of motivation for each new activity, etc);

- the writing of journal can be following by the elaboration of the individual plan for professional development;
- the student could take the decision to choose a certain learning activity and a certain working strategy;
- in the writing process, the students are encouraged to doing the following activities:
  - to register thoughts, feelings;
  - to communicate opinions, experiences, personal impressions regarding the developed activity, their own activity and that of the colleagues;
  - to formulate requirements regarding the clarification of notions, solving some contradictions;
  - to offer supplementary information, solutions for improving the results (Gutu, 2007), etc.
- the teacher must permanently motivate their students in order to make them participate at the learning activity;
- of course, the reflection activity remains in the sphere of the subjectivity, of the personal.

### 3. Conclusion

The purpose of professional education is to train the future specialist, to prepare him for the social changes that may occur. This aspect represents one of the main components of education and it would be best to reach it as soon as possible in order to create the premises of a concrete conception and a motivating attitude by means of assimilating some ethical and ecological values and principles which define the relationships between society-nature-technology. In this way the communication competences are very important in the educational process.

Being used to reflect upon the things that they have done and to communicate their dates, the students will become more responsible on what concerns their own

learning process and the teacher-student relation will be better; also, the learning difficulties will be diminished. Consequently, reflexivity and communicate create motivational situations; reflecting upon what one has done or on what one could have done and communicating the date increase the trust in one's own strenghts and increase the desire to go on with getting to know and to build up one's personality.

Thus, we consider that is not a non-sense to attribute reflexivity an essential role in education. It is our duty: that of including reflexivity among the recognized principles of the educational process. Of, course, the reflection activity remains in the sphere of the subjectivity, of the personal.

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